

**AB 150 Workgroup Meeting #1
May 13, 2020**

Notes:

44 attendees

Review of AB 150 requirements

About Social Change Partners

Review of proposed project plan including timeline, meeting schedule, and deliverables; invitation to join subcommittees (placements, supports and services, and fiscal); and authentic youth engagement strategy.

Participant Comment: None

Review of current programming and outcomes from DCFS, Clark, and Washoe

State DCFS:

- Contract with Ron Wood (FRC) for services; ILP services for 14-21; also support adoption post-16;
- Court Jurisdiction program available for 18+: includes case management and Chafee/FAFFY funding for housing, employment, education, and financial assistance; meet w/youth at least monthly; also support Medicaid issues even after they turn 21; help them with ETV and college aid applications;
- Rural programs are smaller and look different but follow similar model

Clark:

- Step Up Program for youth 18-21: case management, housing assistance, education, employment, transportation; Court Jurisdiction program + FAFFY funds used for second program;
- 311 youth in CJ and 28 in FAFFY;
- About 100 youth age out each year – 95% choose CJ and rest do FAFFY;
- CJ stipend goes directly to youth via debit card, retain attorney, etc;
- FAFFY – money doesn't go to youth directly – County pays; some youth on SSI choose FAFFY because it doesn't impact their benefits;
- Data goes to HMIS system; found that of 5 years of 21 year olds exiting Step Up only 16 accessed homelessness supports; majority (85-90%) exit with housing already in place; have exited 0 to homelessness in last 12 months; have much more data to share when needed

Washoe:

- Program model is similar to Clark (CJ + FAFFY only) and same requirements;
- 25-28 youth aging out per year; about 95% of youth eligible opt in, although some exit and then can move to FAFFY;
- Only 10 of 31 eligible FAFFY youth accessing program – not sure why uptake is so low;
- Case management and human services supports available for youth including monthly contact; support for transition plans – helping them with education, employment, housing and budgeting; hope to be able to share state survey data soon;
- Most SSI youth are on FAFFY not CJ;
- Once youth exit program they cannot access it again (case across the state)

Group Discussion: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges:

What is working?

- Program model introduced aftercare workers to youth *before* turning 18 which allows for additional engagement; monthly contacts through CJ have been very beneficial to youth; less monthly contact required on FAFFY – makes it a struggle to continually engage youth; concept of exchange: resources provided but accountability and engagement required – makes it a development program not just an entitlement
- Youth have ability to choose own placement - they have autonomy over their lives
- Step Up and DFS work very well together to transition youth into the Step Up program. I think it is also beneficial to allow youth to access services through a program other than the Child Welfare agency.
- All of the college-enrolled foster youth I have interacted with consistently say that the support they receive from the 18+ child welfare folks (Joe's Step Up team, Valerie in Washoe, etc.) and their CAP attorneys, under the current state-funded CJ model, is high quality and that they feel supported by those providers.

What's not working?

- CJ doesn't allow youth to reenter – no process for getting back in; not realistic to think young people might not make mistakes
- Lack of placement options, placement options are limited for youth with higher needs, housing difficult after age 18
- Most services stop suddenly at age 21, youth not ready for independence at age 21
- \$773 isn't enough to be independent
- Funding - CJ payments are not reimbursable and are underfunded; state Chafee dollars continue to be decreased over each year limiting our ability to provide services to youth age 14-18

- Not enough case managers to fully meet the youth's needs; Best practice would dictate having smaller caseloads to meet youth's needs.
- It might be helpful if youth were enrolled in some type of vocational program before they exited care, if they are not planning to attend college
- Youth often have started college but then lack resources to continue to support them; need to extend services to ages 24/25 to continue transition to independence – no formal funding or programming right now to do so
- The capacity for robust permanency support for 18+ youth is more limited under the current model, due to budget limitations for the child welfare agencies (compared to what I saw working with young people in a federally-funded extended foster care state).

What are unmet needs of youth?

- Having a comprehensive service array to meet young adult needs from age 18-25 i.e. mental health needs, appropriate housing needs, vocational opportunities, etc.; When youth encounter educational struggles they often lose access to financial aid (they lose benefits), when they continue they have to take out loans and incur additional expenses and don't have the same support through that process - often have to help youth figure out how to pay off loans and educational debt; We have youth that pull out loans to pay for housing; We also have youth attending college from other states that do not have enough to cover educational expenses and housing
- The unmet needs of youth include: Housing, robust support systems for youth as they age out, transitional support past age 21, resources for youth who are not college bound; I can echo that sentiment. Our organization gets a lot of requests to help pay loans that they had and need to start making payments on before they can return to school; Also, we are finding that for those youth who are going directly into the workforce, they really aren't ready. They are struggling with things such as time-management skills, anger management and conflict resolution. They also lack employment and/or training experience to make them competitive in the work place.
- Pell Grants + ETV and other resources give youth a lot of financial assistance for college; youth shouldn't have to be taking out loans, however youth often take out loans to pay for non-tuition costs – i.e. housing and child care, etc.; if they are attending school they have less capacity to work and make money to pay for those things
- We need more placement options for pregnant and parenting youth and another population we need more services and placement needs for are our CSEC youth; We also really struggle with have service and permanency options for developmental delayed population; We also need more specialized trauma informed services for our LGBTQ population as they try to wrestle with identity and intimacy issues due to past trauma and or support in coming out in adulthood; More trauma informed

services for our 18-25 population overall; More service to support and educate young adults around interpersonal violence are also needed.

- More services for youth impacted with MH, ID/DD
- For youth with higher level MH needs they get a social worker with clinical training; some with severe needs access Regional Center services; but for youth just below that level they can struggle; For pregnant and parenting youth (approx. 40?) they would like to develop specialized caseworkers; Maybe consider the "dual custody" youth/young adults (foster care and juvenile justice involvement)
- We must assist youth that have mental health needs; as they experience homelessness at a much higher rate. Also we must assist youth with identifying more community supports; as they are the first line of defense at preventing homelessness. Studies suggest that feeling close to at one least family member can considerably reduce the odds of homelessness by age 19 by more than half.

What are opportunities presented by EFC?

- EFC would allow us to use FFPSA funding to allow young adults to enter back in if they need support after exiting; EFC could increase our overall Chafee funding; EFC could allow us to extend services beyond age 21, if we could use current funding to support up to age 25. Could allow us to provide extended support to young adults.
- Need more information

What are challenges presented by EFC?

- Youth concerned about how it effects and changes CJ and FAFY regulations – how will they impact current programming
- Youth are also concerned about how it would change programs; youth want to know: what is it going to look like?; Youth want freedom and autonomy; need to make sure youth are empowered and supported under any structure
- Court oversight requirements of federal extended foster care and implications

What additional information does the working group need?

- A grounding of what requirements would be needed if opting into federal program (we will build that into the agenda for next workgroup and include with analysis of other states); state analysis should show range of programs from mostly a stipend programs to placement continuum programs, including youth rights
- Question for future discussion: If we opt into EFC do we automatically extend adoption/guardianship subsidy payments to 21 as well?
- What are the youth/young adult preferences about staying in foster care until 21 or aging out at 18 and accessing other supportive services – what is uptake rate in states with extended foster care?
- What do the feds would require the state to change about AB350 to call it EFC

- How is information presented to youth in other states when they are deciding whether or not to opt in to extended foster care; how are opportunities “marketed” to the youth?
- Have other states blended populations in foster homes (i.e. had minors and youth in extended foster care in same foster homes)
- Gather examples from 18+ foster care alumni in other states, in terms of pros and cons of the federally-funded EFC model, from their perspective.
- Present on the Midwest Study, CalYOUTH, perspectives captured in the National Youth in Transition Database
- Engage youth in NV
- Reach out to get feedback from older youth nationwide about their experiences if that is helpful

Recap and Next Steps

1. Ground next conversation in detail about how EFC works in other states
 - a. What does federal law require? (court oversight, placement, etc.)
 - b. How does it overlay on current system? (side by side)
 - c. What has the experience been in other states including youth perspectives?
2. Workgroup members to sign up for subcommittees
3. Help us connect with groups of youth to interview/engage
4. Develop a survey or questionnaire that can be posted to website and circulated for other public input; will develop way to facilitate broader public conversation
5. Workgroup members to be kept apprised in between meetings via website updates and emails